

Grade 4 - Narrative

Heron and Hummingbird

A retold Native American tale

Long ago, when animals ruled the world, Heron and Hummingbird were best friends. They both loved to fish. Hummingbird liked tiny minnows, but Heron preferred bigger fish.

One day Hummingbird said, "Heron, I am afraid there are not enough fish in the rivers and lakes for both of us. Someday there might not be any fish left, so let's have a race. The winner of the race shall have all the fish in the world."

Heron agreed to the race. The friends determined the race would last for four days. The winner of the race would be the first one sitting at the top of the old dead tree at the farthest bend in the river.

The next morning just as the sun peeked over the horizon, the race started. Hummingbird flew several times around Heron, before flying away swiftly and leaving Heron far behind. Heron continued flying steadily forward.

Hummingbird was fast but was easily distracted by all the pretty flowers along the way. Hummingbird would stop to investigate and sip the sweet nectar from the flowers.

Meanwhile, Heron continued flying steadily forward. Around noon on the first day, Heron caught up to Hummingbird. While Hummingbird sipped sweet nectar, Heron became the leader of the race. When Hummingbird realized that Heron had taken the lead, Hummingbird hurried to reach Heron. By late afternoon, Hummingbird had caught up with Heron. Hummingbird flew several times around Heron, before flying away swiftly and leaving Heron far behind.

Hummingbird decided to stop and rest for the night because of exhaustion from flying so quickly. Just as the sun dipped below the horizon, Hummingbird found a nice, comfortable place to perch and sleep all night long. Meanwhile, Heron continued flying steadily forward throughout the night.

On the morning of the second day, Hummingbird woke rested and refreshed. Remembering the race, Hummingbird flew off in a hurry to reach Heron. Around noon, Hummingbird caught up with Heron. Hummingbird flew several times around Heron before flying away swiftly and leaving Heron far behind. Again Hummingbird became distracted by the pretty flowers and flew off to investigate and sip the sweet nectar. Once again, Heron continued flying steadily forward.

And so it went for the rest of the race. Hummingbird quickly passed Heron until the pretty flowers caught Hummingbird's attention. Hummingbird would stop to investigate and sip the sweet nectar from the flowers. Heron would continue flying steadily forward. Each night Hummingbird would rest while Heron would fly on.

Hummingbird woke on the morning of the fourth day rested and refreshed. Remembering the race, Hummingbird quickly flew off. The far bend in the river was becoming visible and Hummingbird was sure of victory. When Hummingbird rounded the bend, there was Heron sitting at the very top of the old dead tree. Heron had won the race by flying steadily forward while Hummingbird was distracted or resting.

From that day on, Heron fished all the rivers and lakes, while Hummingbird sipped sweet nectar from flowers like those discovered during the race.